

Charming Forge, Iron Master's House  
On Tulpehocken Creek, 3 1/2 miles north  
of Womelsdorf  
Womelsdorf Vicinity, Marion Township  
Berks County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1022

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## CHARMING FORGE, IRON MASTER'S HOUSE

Location: On Tulpehocken Creek, 3 1/2 miles north of Womelsdorf, Womelsdorf Vicinity, Marion Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Lee M. Sallade, 129 West High Street, Womelsdorf, Pa.

Present Occupant: Owner.

Present Use: Country House.

Brief Statement of Significance: The Iron Master's house at Charming Forge was the residence of "Baron" Stiegel and later of George Ege, and is an example of a large eighteenth century Georgian mansion.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Original and subsequent owners:

Charming Forge, originally called the Tulpehocken Eisenhammer, was started in 1749 by John George Nikoll and Michael Miller. In 1757 the property passed to Michael Reis and Garrett Brenner. By 1757 "Baron" Henry William Stiegel had started buying adjacent land. In 1763 Stiegel bought the forge, but soon after sold an undivided half share to Charles and Alexander Stedman. In 1770, when Charles Stedman bought out Alexander's interest, the name Charming Forge appeared for the first time as the official name of the place in the deed. Stiegel failed financially and at Sheriff's sale in 1773 his half share was sold to Paul Zensinger. Zensinger sold the share in turn to Stiegel's son-in-law, George Ege, on the same day. Stiegel spent a year during 1774-1775 in debtors' prison in Philadelphia.

Ege bought Stedman's share in 1881, and for about 50 years was identified with this and several other furnaces and forges in Berks County. At one time, Ege was the largest land owner in Berks County, and was elected to the Pennsylvania General Assembly and made an Associate Judge. Business difficulties forced Ege to make an assignment of his holdings in 1824. Andrew Taylor served as the principal assignee, and though Ege was in debt for \$300,000, his estate proved solvent.

After Ege's death in 1830, the estate passed through several hands finally becoming the property of the assignee, Taylor and his sons, William Taylor and B. Franklin Taylor, in 1855. After remaining in the Taylor family for many years, Charming Forge passed to the Sallade family, the present owner being Lee M. Sallade.

B. Date of erection:

The house is in two sections and was apparently built at two different times. The larger, two-and-a-half story main block was built in 1777 for George Ege. The smaller, two-and-a-half story wing is apparently earlier, built between 1749 and 1777, and was probably Stiegel's home.

C. References:

1. P. C. Croll, Annals of Womelsdorf, Pa. and Community, 1723-1923 (Reading, Pennsylvania: Reading Eagle Press, 1923), pp. 42-49.
2. A. Lawrence Kocher, "Early Architecture of Pennsylvania," Architectural Record, Part 2, Vol. XLIX (1921), pp. 31-47.
3. Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Everts, Peck and Richards, 1886), pp. 92-93.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
January 1961

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The mansion at Charming Forge consists of two buildings, a large two-story stone house and a smaller one, also of two stories, which forms a wing of the larger building. The larger building is a five bay house with a gable roof with three dormers on each side. The smaller building is of an earlier type with a gable roof and a pent roof between the first and second floor windows on the front. The later portion has an unusual broken pent roof on the rear. The fabric appears to be structurally sound and is kept in good repair by the present owner.

The foundations and exterior walls are of stone laid in irregular courses with prominent quoins on the larger portion. A one-story frame porch across the front of the large building with wood brackets forming low pointed arches between the supporting posts was added in the 19th century.

The front door, centered in the larger block, appears to be a nineteenth century replacement made at the time the porch was added. The windows are large double hung sash of twelve over twelve panes with solid three panel shutters. There are large lintels with projecting keystones.

The house is situated on a slope overlooking the Tulpehocken Creek and the site of the forge buildings.

Prepared by Drury B. Alexander  
University of Pennsylvania  
August 1958